

## External Review of Governance 2024

As a sixth form college corporation, Peter Symonds College is required to commission an external review of governance (EGR) every three years. An EGR is conducted by an experienced governance expert who is independent of the Board and the staff of a college. The purpose of the review is to examine the structure, operations and performance of the Board, considering matters such as the process and impact of decision making, the effectiveness of the governance support provided to the Board and compliance with mandatory requirements.<sup>1</sup> The Board commissioned Stone King LLP to carry out an EGR in the spring and summer of 2024.

The review found that the governance of Peter Symonds College is committed, structured and demonstrates highly effective processes and practice. The Governing Board continues to refine and develop its practice to further enhance governing and add benefit to the College. Governors value the College and its place in their community; as a result, they undertake their roles diligently.

The reviewer found that a positive culture within the members of the Governing Board and in their relationships with senior staff enabled and supported the balanced and well received challenge and support given at the Board and committee meetings. Discussion and questioning were open and inclusive, enabling key issues to be considered without impediment. This in turn enabled conclusions and decisions to be reached.

A Board is able to set its own specific focus for an EGR and the governors requested that the review be directed to the first three principles of the new AoC Code of Governance 2023: determination of aims and strategic oversight; responsibility and accountability; leadership and integrity. These issues were considered throughout this review; based on the information provided through the observations, interviews and examination of documentation, the reviewer found that the Governing Board is well placed to evidence compliance with these principles.

Members of the Board will develop an action plan arising from the EGR and will also continue the existing practice of internal annual review. It is currently intended that a further EGR be commissioned in the academic year 2026/27.

Board of Governors of Peter Symonds College July 2024

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/external-reviews-of-governance-whats-involved>